

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CU-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1894

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 2187

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT ASEC KE

SUBJ: AFTERMATH OF KARIUKI SLAYING

REF: NAIROBI 2098

1. NAIROBI IS CALM AND FUNCTIONING NORMALLY WITH EXCEPTION OF UNIVERSITY WHERE STUDENTS HAVE BOYCOTTED CLASSES, DISTRIBUTED ANTI-GOVERNMENT PAMPHLETS AND HELD PROTEST RALLIES CONDEMNING KILLING OF WIDELY POPULAR MP AND GOK CRITIC, J.M. KARIUKI. RIOT POLICE HAVE EASILY BROKEN UP SEVERAL SMALL DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN LARGELY CONFINED TO AREA AROUND UNIVERSITY. STUDENTS, WHOSE ACTIONS VIOLATE EXISTING PRESIDENTIAL BAN ON STRIKES AND DEMONSTRATIONS, ARE EXPECTED TO RETURN TO CLASSES NEXT MONDAY FOLLOWING MARCH 16 BURIAL OF KARIUKI AT HIS FARM 70 MILES NORTH-WEST OF NAIROBI. SECURITY FORCES, WHICH HAVE BEEN ON ALERT ALL WEEK, EXPECTED TO BE FULLY MOBILIZED THROUGHOUT COUNTRY ON DAY OF BURIAL.

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2. UNSUBSTANTIATED RUMORS, WHICH WERE RIFE IN CITY

DURING PAST THREE DAYS, HAVE LARGELY SUBSIDED. THESE REPORTS, SOME OF WHICH WE UNDERSTAND WERE PUBLISHED ABROAD, INCLUDED ARREST OR ASSASSINATION OF LEADING MILITARY OFFICERS AND MP'S KNOWN TO BE CRITICAL OF GOK. THESE RUMORS HAVE BEEN WITHOUT FOUNDATION.

3. FOCUS OF ATTENTION IN PAST SEVERAL DAYS HAS BEEN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WHERE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF AFFAIR WAS SHARPLY ATTACKED MARCH 13 BY KARIUKI'S NUMEROUS PARLIAMENTARY ALLIES AND PERSONAL FRIENDS, SOME OF WHOM HAVE CHARGED HIGH-LEVEL COMPLICITY AND/OR GOK COVER UP. MOTION INTRODUCED BY VP MOI CALLING FOR CREATION SELECT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY WAS PASSED BY ACCLAMATION MARCH 14. CHARLES RUBIA AND MARTIN SHIKUKU ARE AMONG FORMER CLOSE COLLABORATORS OF KARIUKI INCLUDED ON 15-MEMBER COMMITTEE.

4. COMMENT: ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEE SHOULD HELP DEFUSE SITUATION BY ALLAYING PUBLIC FEARS OF GOVERNMENT WHITEWASH. NEVERTHELESS THE MURDER OF J.M. KARIUKI MAY BE TURNING POINT FOR GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT KENYATTA. WIDESPREAD PUBLIC AWARENESS AND RESENTMENT OF TRIBAL FAVORITISM, LARGE-SCALE CORRUPTION AND AVARICE AT THE TOP HAS COMBINED WITH HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT, DOUBLE DIGIT INFLATION AND OTHER ECONOMIC WOES TO PRODUCE GRADUAL EROSION OF KENYATTA'S PRESTIGE IN LAST YEAR. FACT THAT PRESIDENT NOW WIDELY BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN SOMEHOW INVOLVED IN KARIUKI'S MURDER IS ADDITIONAL HEAVY BLOW TO HIS AUTHORITY FROM WHICH MANY OBSERVERS CONTEND HE MAY NEVER FULLY RECOVER.
MARSHALL

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